



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Massachusetts State Office**

451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002  
413-253-4350, fax 413-253-4375  
[www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov)

# NEWS RELEASE

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Diane Baedeker Petit  
Public Affairs Officer  
413-253-4371

## **USDA extends sign-up for 2008 Conservation Security Program**

### **CSP sign-up will run through May 30, 2008**

AMHERST, Mass. (May 8, 2008) — U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced that Massachusetts farmers in the Connecticut River watershed and the Narragansett Bay watershed, along with others across the nation, will have two additional weeks to apply for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) in fiscal year 2008. The sign-up now ends on **May 30, 2008**. Originally, the CSP sign-up was scheduled to run from April 18-May 16, 2008.

CSP, a voluntary program, encourages and rewards producers who practice outstanding stewardship on working agricultural land by offering financial incentives that increase with the level of conservation effort. Soil and water quality are the primary focus of this program; however, program goals also include improved wildlife habitat, air quality, and environmentally responsible energy production.

For more information about CSP and eligibility requirements, farmers should contact their local NRCS office: local USDA service center; locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture. CSP information is also available at [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp).

"NRCS recognizes the inopportune timing of this year's sign-up and that farmers are busy in their fields. We want to give them as much time as possible," NRCS Massachusetts State Conservationist Christine S. Clarke said. "The NRCS national office has extended the sign-up as much as possible to allow producers adequate time to gather natural resource information and complete the required self-assessment and applicant interview. This two-week extension represents the fullest accommodation we can make and deliver a program this year."

USDA-NRCS began CSP in fiscal year 2004. Currently, there are 331 enrolled watersheds covering nearly 248 million acres eligible for CSP nationwide. These numbers include the 51 watersheds in this fiscal year's sign-up, which include the Connecticut River watershed in Massachusetts and New Hampshire and the Narragansett Bay watershed in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

###